

NEWSLETTER



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January 2026

March 2026

OBSERVATION OF THE REPEATED EARLY ELECTIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SRPSKA



The Coalition "Pod lupom" deployed 111 citizen, non-partisan election-day observers to monitor the entire electoral process during the Repeated Early Elections for the President of the Republic of Srpska from among the Serb people, held on February 8, 2026, at 136 polling stations across 17 electoral units.

The Coalition "Pod lupom" preliminary assessment of election day indicates that the electoral process - observed strictly within the methodology of direct observation at polling stations - was, to a large extent, conducted in accordance with the applicable legal framework and prescribed procedures. However, certain irregularities were recorded at individual polling stations which, in isolated cases, may have affected the voting results at those locations. Additionally, observer access during these elections was hindered by decisions of the Central Election Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CEC BiH), as well as in practice due to arbitrary interpretations of procedures and rules by the election administration. This represents a step backward in achieved democratic standards and electoral practice.

At the same time, the overall picture of election day cannot be assessed solely on the basis of findings from polling stations. A significant number of indications of electoral irregularities were recorded during election day, relating to activities outside the scope of direct observation at polling stations. These include pressure on voters in the vicinity of polling stations, the maintenance of parallel voter turnout records, indications of one-party-dominated polling station committees with allegations of politically affiliated chairpersons, as well as possible vote buying. The scale and frequency of these cases raise justified concerns regarding the overall integrity of election day. In this context, despite the formal adherence to procedures at most polling stations, the potential impact of irregularities on the free will of voters cannot be fully excluded.

The preliminary assessment of election day confirms:

- that electoral technologies such as electronic voter identification and ballot scanning must be introduced at all polling stations on election day, in order to prevent documented irregularities that were also the reason for repeating these elections;
- that the police and prosecution authorities must urgently process all forms of unlawful pressure on voters, to ensure that election results reflect the genuine will of citizens;
- that the election administration must be free from any political influence, in accordance with the law; and
- that the conduct of independent election observation must be encouraged by institutions, and observer access to polling stations facilitated.

Scan the code and read more about the election day observation findings!



OBSERVATION OF THE EARLY ELECTIONS FOR THE MAYOR OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF VAREŠ



Early Elections
for the Mayor of the Municipality of Vareš

**ELECTION DAY IN VAREŠ
LARGELY CONDUCTED IN
ACCORDANCE WITH
ELECTORAL RULES**

Early Elections for Mayor of Vareš
Municipality
15 February 2025

43%

voter turnout by 7 p.m.



The Coalition "Pod lupom" conducted a citizen, non-partisan observation mission for the Early Elections for the Mayor of the Municipality of Vareš, held on Sunday, February 15, 2026.

On election day, the Coalition "Pod lupom" deployed election-day observers (STOs) to all 20 polling stations in the Municipality of Vareš, where they directly and continuously monitored the entire electoral process. In addition, one mobile team was formed to visit polling stations throughout the day.

Election-day observers monitored all phases of the electoral process, including the setup and opening of polling stations, the voting process, the closing of polling stations, vote counting, packaging of election materials, and the announcement of election results.

The Coalition "Pod lupom" also tracked voter turnout throughout election day, providing independent data on voter participation in the Municipality of Vareš. Turnout data were published at three time intervals: 11:00, 15:00, and 19:00.

In the evening hours on election day, following the closure of polling stations and the collection of field data, the Coalition "Pod lupom" also published preliminary election results for the Mayor of the Municipality of Vareš.



Scan the code and read more about the election day observation findings!

PUBLIC CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER ELECTIONS & I VOTE FOR THE FIRST TIME



The Coalition “Pod lupom” has continued implementing its ongoing activities as part of a public campaign carried out across Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the recent period, the focus has been on **Academies for Fair Elections**, aimed at the general public and all citizens interested in learning more about the electoral process, as well as on **“I Vote for the First Time”** workshops, primarily targeted at young people and those exercising their voting rights for the first time.

Through these educational activities, the Coalition “Pod lupom” seeks to increase citizens’ awareness of elections, encourage more active participation in the electoral process, and further contribute to strengthening democratic culture in communities across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

PUBLIC CAMPAIGN IN NUMBERS

9448

citizens directly engaged in public campaign activities

3571

participants in the “I Vote for the First Time” educational workshops

1341

certified participants of the Academy for Fair Elections

288

“I Vote for the First Time” workshops

108

Academies for Fair Elections

PODCAST 'ELECTION COMPASS'



Pod lupom has released a new episode of its informational and educational podcast **“Election Compass”**, which focuses on one of the most frequently discussed aspects of the electoral process: the **Central Voter Register of Bosnia and Herzegovina (CVR)**.

In a conversation hosted by Hasan Kamenjaković, the episode features Pod lupom Project Manager, Dario Jovanović, who provides a detailed explanation of what the CVR is, who manages it, how up-to-date it is, whether it is truly public, and the electoral irregularities associated with it. The new episode offers in-depth explanations, concrete examples, and clear recommendations for strengthening the integrity of the CVR and the overall electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



Scan for episodes on the YouTube channel in Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian!



Scan for episodes on Spotify in Bosnian, Croatian/Serbian!

STUDENTS FROM JOHNS HOPKINS AND THE UNIVERSITY OF BOLOGNA VISIT THE COALITION "POD LUPOM"



Pod lupom hosted a group of students from Johns Hopkins SAIS Europe and the University of Bologna in Sarajevo, as part of the annual study visit organized by the Center for Constitutional Studies and Democratic Development (CCSDD). During the visit, a working meeting and a presentation of the Pod lupom activities were held, aimed at familiarizing students with local perspectives on democratic development, the electoral process, and the strengthening of the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The study visit is part of a broader program that allows students to gain first-hand insight into the country's constitutional development, post-war reconstruction, and the role of civil society in democratic processes.

SUPPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE IN BIH FOR FREE AND FAIR ELECTIONS



The High Representative in BiH, Christian Schmidt, met with Dario Jovanović, Project Manager of the Pod lupom, to discuss the conduct of free and fair repeated early elections in the Republic of Srpska.

During the meeting, the importance of a transparent and lawful electoral process was emphasized, along with the role of citizen observers and the significance of volunteers monitoring elections on the ground. It was highlighted that elections must be organized in the interest of citizens, that political actors should contribute to a fair and constructive electoral environment, and that any attempts at manipulation or abuse must be appropriately sanctioned to preserve election integrity and voter trust.

TWO-DAY AFTER ACTIVITY REVIEW HELD WITH MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS OF THE COALITION "POD LUPOM"



The Coalition "Pod lupom" held a two-day After Activity Review (AAR) dedicated to reflecting on and evaluating activities related to election observation and the implementation of the public campaign for better elections. Member organizations of the Coalition "Pod lupom" participated in the AAR, during which experiences were shared, challenges were identified, and recommendations were defined to ensure the successful implementation of future activities.

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